

HR Corner

Linking people and technology

by Sophie Leung



Naresh Kumra (left), president,
Asia Pacific
Kenny Yeung, vice president,
human resources, Asia Pacific
Belden Asia (Hong Kong)
Limited

Photo: Edde Ngan

Sophisticated and comprehensive talent management infrastructure creates values in prized workforce

Companies who treat their associates well can usually expect loyalty, hard work and a good return on their investment, creating a win-win relationship for all parties concerned.

Global signal transmission solutions provider Belden is one employer who regards investing in its people as a priority in pursuing its long-term goals. The company has earmarked more than US\$4 million for its talent management infrastructure in Asia alone, says Naresh Kumra, president, Asia Pacific, Belden Asia (Hong Kong) Limited.

Founded in Chicago in 1902 and headquartered in the US, Belden focuses on products for the specialty electronics and data-networking markets, including connectivity. The company's Asia

Pacific arm has seen splendid growth with the number of its associates surging from 100 to 4,000 in just two years.

"While the route to corporate success lies in giving our customers what they need, we can only make this happen by mining our human resources. For this reason, talent management lies at the very heart of our business," he stresses.

Mr Kumra concedes that the company plans to streamline operations in response to economic realities, but he says management will refrain from cutting its staff budget.

"Talent management is a cornerstone of our strategic pyramid. This clearly illustrates the importance of human resources to the business," Mr Kumra notes.

"Investing in talent development yields enormous returns, which not only benefit our associates, but also the company and our customers," agrees Kenny Yeung, vice president, human resources, Asia Pacific, Belden. Mr Yeung stresses that by attracting and retaining the very best talent, Belden is able to deliver quality service and create value for its customers.

Shared values

Belden's unique corporate culture revolves around six key values, and the company regards talent management as more than merely offering monetary compensation, Mr Kumra explains. "It is important for us to reward our associates in a number of ways. We also emphasise the development of our staff, helping them to succeed in both their careers and personal lives, while taking into account their emotional well-being," he says.

Belden expects its staff to strive for only the best. "Continuous improvement is our way of life," Mr Kumra notes. "We are always happy, but never satisfied." This attitude is Belden's

"Our comprehensive engagement

driving force for business and personal success, he says.

plan caters for diverse needs and aspirations"

Associates "play to win", and the company stresses teamwork and open communication. "We believe that our company values appeal to ambitious, high-calibre professionals, but we do realise that every individual is different, so our comprehensive engagement plan caters for diverse needs and aspirations," states Mr Kumra.

It is a priority for Belden to recruit experienced associates to assist with strategic planning, Mr Yeung notes, adding that the company identifies future leaders by evaluating candidates' performance, problem-solving skills, adaptability and capacity for learning. Associates are actively developed and exposed to a variety of business sectors.

Winning formula

Belden had the distinction of winning a Diamond Award in the HSBC Living Business Awards 2008. "The judging criteria aligned with our corporate philosophy, and we won because of our outstanding achievements in talent and community development," Mr Yeung states.

He notes that Belden has developed an e-learning system comprising more than 900 learning modules. This enables associates to learn at their own pace. The system is recognised as one of the best of its kind in Asia.

When it comes to associate training and evaluation, Belden focuses on technical, management and social skills. "Getting the job done does not only depend on individuals' technical capabilities, but also on how they relate to others. We therefore make sure that our team has the necessary social skills to fit into the Belden community," says Mr Yeung.

New recruits are required to undergo four days of orientation and are given welcoming gifts.

"We want our associates to feel a sense of purpose in their jobs," Mr Yeung notes. As such, Belden reaches out to the community by being socially responsible, and advocates a healthy work-life balance. The company contributes to charity efforts, for example, it set up an emergency relief committee and fund in aid of the devastating Sichuan earthquakes. "We recognise our associates' skills and progress and make sure they are rewarded for their efforts while contributing to society," he concludes.

Salient points

- Talent management central to company's success
- Corporate values appeal to new recruits
- Comprehensive orientation and training promote teamwork
- Community efforts and social responsibility provide sense of belonging

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